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# **ABSTRACTS**



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## **'Ghost nets' in the marine ecosystem: need for responsible fishing**

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Reports on the occurrence of 'ghost nets' in the Indian waters are limited. Sometimes these partly torn nets, discarded by fishermen, drift on the surface or column waters and at times they get entangled on submerged objects or rocks in the aquatic environment. These ghost nets act as traps and entangle both fauna and other non-degradable waste objects like plastics and metal drums. During the last three years, ghost nets were observed in the central Arabian sea and the impacts of these ghost nets on turtles were recorded. More recently, the stranding a 32.5 m long ghost net in Vypin Island, Kerala was studied in detail. It was observed that ghost nets act as debris collectors. The net had entangled ropes, plastic bottles (13 nos.), plastic jugs (4 nos.), buoys (5 nos.), plastic covers (9 nos.), thermocol pieces (7 nos.), cans and jigs with steel hooks. The ghost net consisted of nets with different mesh sizes. Entangled in the 32.5 m long net was a small piece of skeletal remains of a whale. Disposing such nets is a problem for coastal villagers and in this instance the villagers had decided to dry the net and sell it to the scrap yard where it will be melted and reused for other purposes. Targeted studies in the near-shore areas have also indicated the occurrence of ghost nets. There are also chances of such ghost nets getting entangled in the propeller of boats. The need to create awareness among the fishers to prevent such instances of ghost fishing has become highly relevant.

**Keywords:** Ghost nets, discarded fishing nets, fisheries environment.